

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

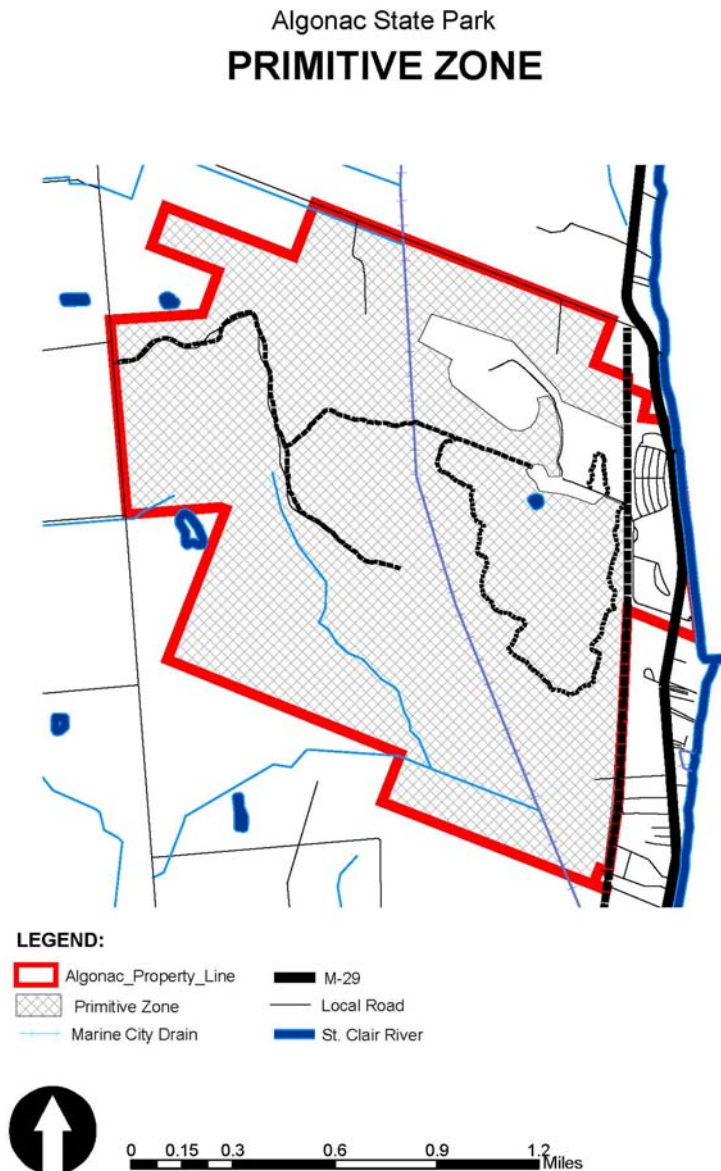
With guidance of the Algonac SP Planning Team (inclusive Department participation) and input from our stakeholders and the public, the park “Purpose and Significance Statements” were drafted and adopted. This established an identity for Algonac State Park that highlights; the unique ecological importance of the park as part of the St. Clair Flats Delta, the opportunities to re-establish rare lakeplain prairies and oak openings, the historical connection of Algonac SP to viewing of the St. Clair River and Great Lakes boating and shipping activities, and the special recreation and educational opportunities that follow these important qualities of this park.

Based on this ‘identity’ for the park, a “Management Zone Plan” was subsequently drafted and adopted with stakeholder support and no public objection. The Management Zone Definitions apply to each zone used, with special considerations highlighted in the following descriptive narratives of management guidance for each zone of the park:



Primitive Zone

The majority of park acreage is identified as this zone. In general terms, it is all of the park property west of the 'Bridge to Bay' rail-trail, less those areas dedicated for Day-Use and Campgrounds.



In this 1,170 acre zone (83% of the park) are found seven Natural Resources Commission dedicated natural areas that make up 62 acres, as well as the 370 acre proposed "Natural Area", legally defined under Act 451 of 1994.

This zone is the target of our Department's long standing efforts to preserve and re-establish the lakeplain prairie and oak savannah communities, which are of global significance. The PRD Stewardship program has targeted Algonac SP and specifically, work in this part of the park for their restoration efforts. Their goal is "...to restore Algonac SP to a sustainable, functioning, high quality lakeplain landscape consistent with the original lakeplain prairies and oak openings that existed in the region prior to European-American settlement" (Palmgren, 2002).

The Zone is bisected by the Marine City Drain, which runs from north to south through the park. The Right-of-Way for this drain is 200' wide (100' from Center Line). Much of this land was historically cleared and farmed, but now is covered with both prairie and savannah remnants and expansion of understory and overstory. West of the rail-trail to the drain, and west yet of the drain, the land is relatively flat. Along the westerly boundary of the park (and this zone) are old shoreline remnants of sand ridges and a much more heavily wooded condition. Following are the values to be attained in this zone:

- Natural Resources – A "Stewardship Management Plan" for Algonac State Park was adopted in 2002. This plan presents the specific prescriptive measures of management for the entire park. In general, it calls for long-term efforts to reduce fragmentation of cover-type, control of invasive species, and attainment of large, contiguous blocks of Lakeplain Wet-mesic Prairie, Lakeplain Mesic Prairie, Lakeplain Oak Openings (Savannahs), and Great Lakes Marsh. **The guidance of the Stewardship Plan will dictate actions in this zone.**
- Historic/Cultural Resources – **If any activity in this zone requires earthwork, it must first be reviewed and approved by Stewardship.** Known archeological sites exist primarily along the sand ridges on the west end of the park, and the likelihood exists that others could be found in this zone.
- Recreational Opportunities – With the focus of this zone being restoration and enhancement of the natural communities that once dominated this landscape, the Primitive Zone designation strengthens that focus and limits recreation to low density uses, such as hunting, trapping, birding and foot trail use. **No bicycle, equestrian, 'All Terrain Vehicle' (ATV), 'Off-Road Vehicle (ORV), snowmobile, or any other non-human form of conveyance is allowed in this zone.**
- Education Opportunities – The ecological significance of this park and the work being conducted in this zone offer wonderful opportunities for education and research. Educational materials can be presented through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and at other locations. **Specific planning recommendations for education**

and interpretation will require input from Education and Outreach (EO) and others.

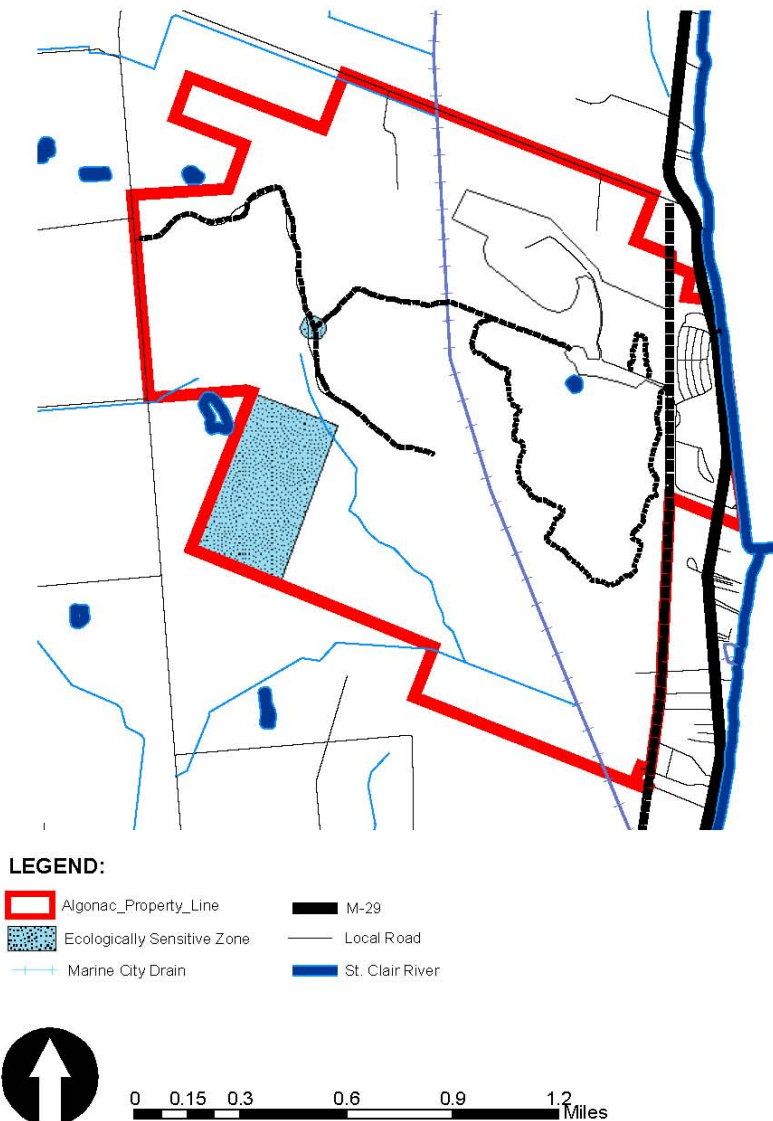
- Visitor Experience – This will reflect the high degree of ‘natural’ feel of the zone, a significant sense of solitude, and a lack of man-made improvements. **The visitor will likely experience restoration efforts over time, which can include prescribed burning and mechanical methods (ie. hydro-ax clearing) of vegetation modification, as well as plant restoration efforts.**
- Management Focus – Management of this zone will be focused on the Stewardship Plan recommendations for restoration, and maintaining the low-impact character of the zone. **It is recommended to expand the legal “Natural Area” designation to encompass this entire zone.** This would provide enforceable status to the use limitations that are needed. In this zone there is only limited trail development permitted, with no mechanized or equestrian uses allowed.
- Development - Only trail improvements (which can include boardwalks, observation overlooks/platforms, and bridges) and educational or interpretive signage will be the evidence of man-made elements in this zone. Any improvements needed for resource protection, such as erosion control, shall be ‘natural’ in character. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process. Guidance for approvals will be that any development will maintain as little evidence of human activity as possible.

(NOTE...a portion of this zone has been identified as an Ecologically Sensitive Zone. (description follows)

Ecologically Sensitive Zone

In the southwest corner of the park (and the Primitive Zone), two tracts of land are identified for purposes of protecting active heron rookeries. The largest tract is approximately 80 acres in area. Another small rookery lies approximately ¼ mile north of this large area, and is comprised of approximately ten acres of wooded habitat.

Algonac State Park
ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE ZONE
(Seasonal Heron Rookery)



It must be acknowledged that the zone locations we have shown have been determined by the herons. If they decide to move or nest elsewhere in the park, the zone will move with them.

This zone designation carries with it a 'Seasonal' condition that protects the rookeries during active nesting (April 2 – September 14), but allows entry and use of the area during the hunting season of September 15 to April 1. All of the values of the Primitive Zone apply to this area, and additionally, the following values will be attained:

- Natural Resources – **Maintaining the integrity of the natural habitat of the rookeries is the primary purpose of this designation.** Rookeries are a critical element to the survival of this species. These birds colonize in a concentrated area during nesting. Any disruption of this would impact the heron population of not just the park, but also that of a wide geographic area. While selective timber harvest and vegetative management (prescribed burns) to address invasive species or re-establish native systems is allowed, **no such measures will take place during the 'season' of this zone.**
- Historic/Cultural Resources – **If any activity in this zone requires earthwork, it must first be reviewed and approved by Stewardship.** Known archeological sites exist primarily along the sand ridges on the west end of the park, and the likelihood exists that others could be found in this zone.
- Recreation Opportunities – Public entry into this zone will not be allowed during the zone season, so that the heron rookeries stay undisturbed during the time of nesting. During the hunting season (September 15 to April 1), access is allowed. **No bicycle, equestrian, 'All Terrain Vehicle' (ATV), 'Off-Road Vehicle (ORV), snowmobile, or any other non-human form of conveyance is allowed in this zone.**
- Education Opportunities – Interpretation of the rookery can take place outside the zone. Educational materials can be presented through the use of kiosks at trailheads and interpretive signage along trails and at other locations.
- Visitor Experience – This will reflect the high degree of 'natural' feel of the zone, a significant sense of solitude, and a lack of man-made improvements. **During the 'Off-Season' time of this zone, the visitor will likely experience restoration efforts over time. This can include controlled burning and mechanical methods (ie. hydro-ax clearing) of vegetation modification, as well as plant restoration efforts.** During the 'Season' of this zone designation, visitors will not be allowed in the zone.

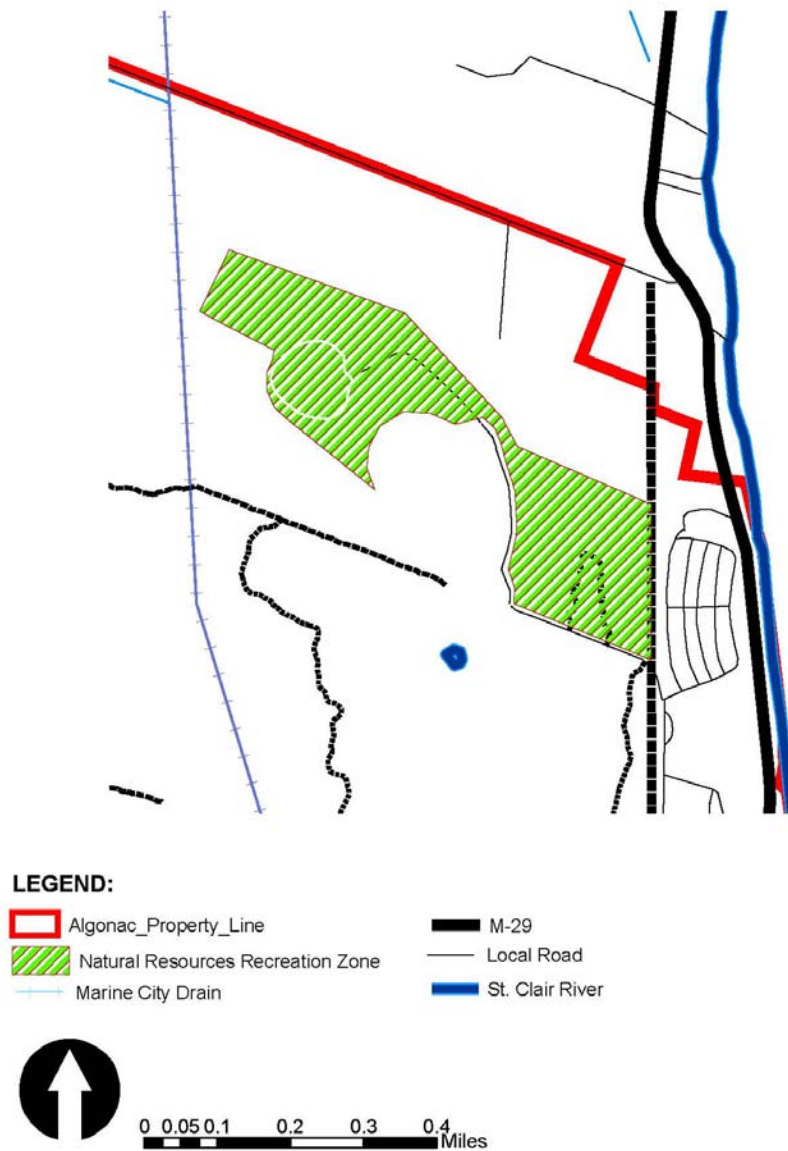
- Management Focus – Management of this zone will be focused on the Stewardship Plan recommendations for restoration, maintaining the low-impact character of the zone, and most significantly, maintaining the quality of life for the heron rookeries by controlling human disturbances.
- Development - Only trail improvements (can include boardwalks, observation overlooks / platforms, and bridges) and educational or interpretive signage will be the evidence of man-made elements in this zone. Any improvements needed for resource protection, such as erosion control, shall be ‘natural’ in character. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process and will be constructed in the “Off-Season” of the zone. Guidance for approvals will be that any development will maintain as little evidence of human activity as possible.

Natural Resource Recreation Zone

This 62 acre zone is located in close proximity to that portion of the 'Developed Recreation Zone' that lies immediately west of the rail-trail.

Algonac State Park

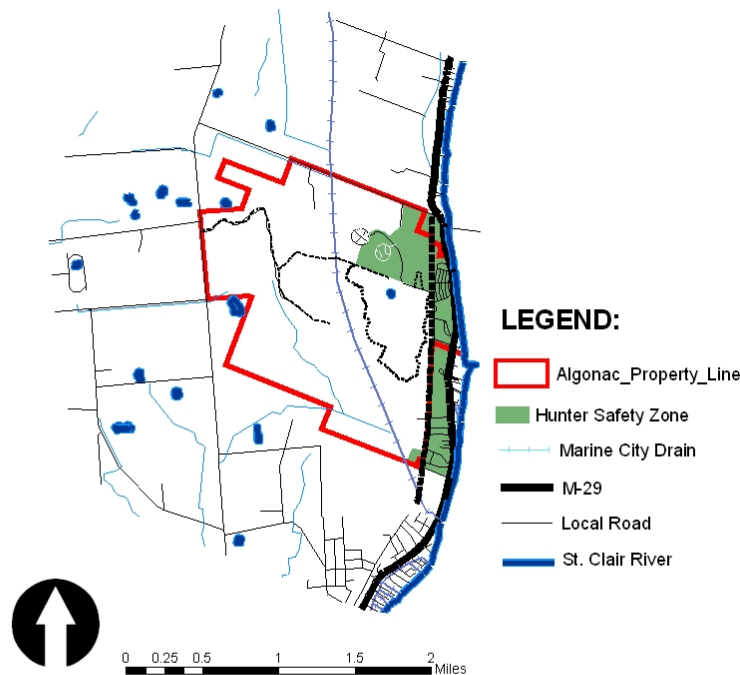
NATURAL RESOURCE RECREATION ZONE



The purpose of this designation is to recognize the more intensive public use of the area for general recreational purposes and special events (ie. Historic Re-enactment). There are scattered occurrences of Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern species in this area. The following values will be attained:

- Natural Resources –In general, the natural resources can be modified to support visitor activities, provided it still falls within the guidance of the Stewardship Plan and does not cause damage to high quality lakeplain prairie habitats or Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern species.
- Historic/Cultural Resources – **If any activity in this zone requires earthwork, it must first be reviewed and approved by Stewardship.**
- Recreation Opportunities – General recreation takes place in this zone. **No snowmobile, ATV, or ORV use will be allowed.** In part of this zone (north and west of the Organizational Campground), hunting is allowed.

ALGONAC HUNTING SAFETY ZONE

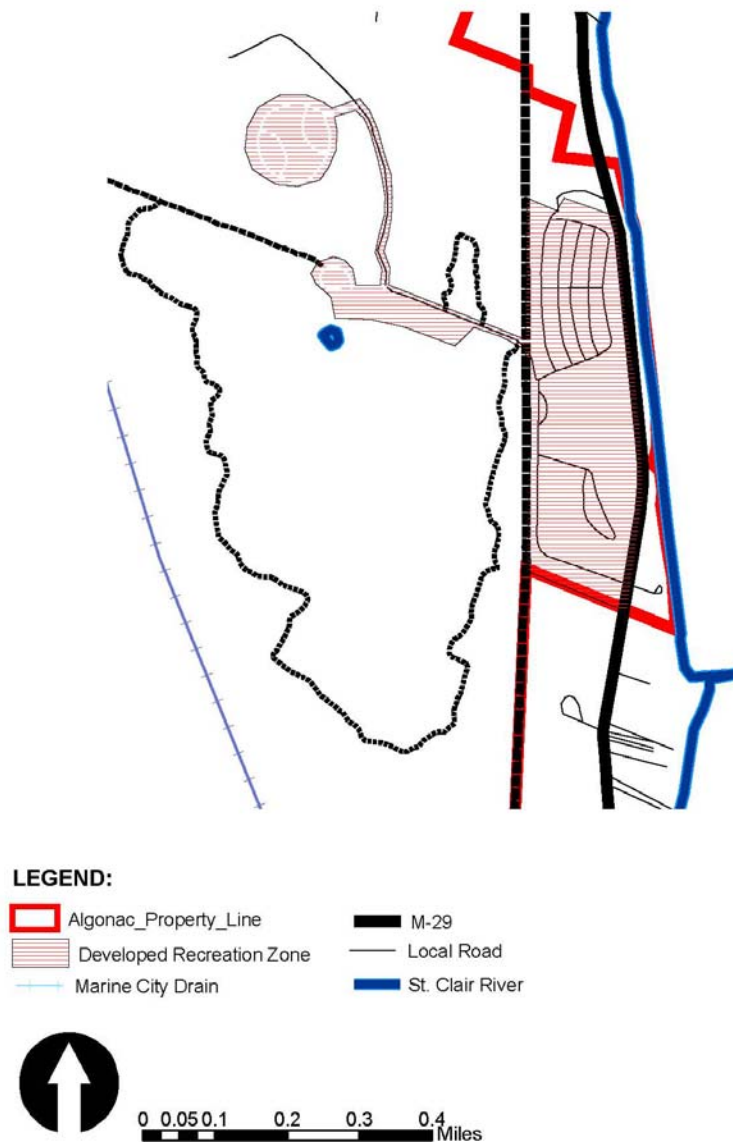


- Education Opportunities – The Blazing Star Prairie lies within this zone and was developed as an educational tool, intended for high public exposure. It is served by an interpretive trail (with signage) through the prairie with an informational kiosk at the trailhead. The Youth Group Organizational Campground is the highest public use of this zone and it is also the location of the annual Historic Re-enactment Camps each fall, which provide educational experiences depicting the Native American and European settlements of the area.
- Visitor Experience – In close proximity to the Developed Recreation Zone, the visitor can expect a high level of encounters with other park visitors, particularly with the 'Blazing Star Prairie' Trail as a key element of this zone. In part of this zone (north and west of the Organizational Campground), hunting is allowed. (see map of 'Hunting Safety Zone')
- Management Focus – Maintain public awareness of the educational opportunities in this zone, and develop/maintain ADA access to same. Provide / maintain signage for the hunting 'Safety Zone'. Protect any scattered occurrences of Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern species in this area.
- Development – Any development activity will focus on complimenting the educational uses of this zone. Provide/maintain ADA trail access. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process

Developed Recreation Zone

Comprised of 67 acres, this includes the majority of park land that is bordered by the Bridge-to-Bay Trail to the west and M-29 to the east. It also includes a well defined area west of the trail.

Algonac State Park **DEVELOPED RECREATION ZONE**



This zone includes the 'Riverfront Campground', the Day-Use Picnic Area, and the informal shore access to the St. Clair River, as well as the modern 'Wagon Wheel Campground', a picnic area and the Archery and Trap Ranges.

- Natural Resources –In general, the natural resources can be modified to support visitor activities, provided it still falls within the guidance of the Stewardship Plan. In this zone, active recreation dominates with natural resource attributes enhanced as possible. This area is not designated for natural resource significance.
- Historic/Cultural Resources – **If any activity in this zone requires earthwork, it must first be reviewed and approved by Stewardship.**
- Recreation Opportunities – This is the focus of this zone. Camping, picnicking, archery, trap shooting, and general day-use activities are accommodated and encouraged. The Bridge-to-Bay Trail connects directly to this zone and provides visitors to the park a direct link to that linear trail system.

Viewing of the St. Clair River boat activity is a popular recreational pastime in this zone, particularly for those campsites that have a direct view of the river. Boating access to the river is available at the Marine City Boating Access Site (BAS) and the North Channel BAS (near Algonac).

- Education Opportunities – In this most populated and visited of zones in the park is found the most opportunity for guidance to education and interpretation of the entire park. The 'State Park Explorer Program' takes advantage of this in recruiting interest from campers for their interpretive programming, and this can be expanded upon.

This program to date has focused on the prairie and the natural resources of this unique park. The opportunity exists for an expanded educational focus in this zone on the Great Lakes boating/shipping activity that many are so interested in viewing.

The park is lacking facilities for group education, or a common or centralized location for educational purposes. Past remedies have been to rent a tent to conduct a slide show for interpretive programming.

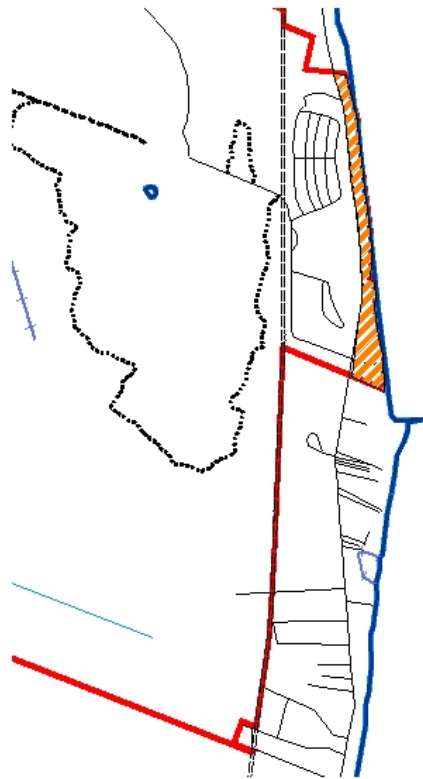
- Visitor Experience – With the focus of this zone being the developed campgrounds and other attributes, the visitor will experience a high level of encounters with other park visitors during the summer months. As with many parks, early and late season use is diminished. **Hunting is not allowed in this zone.**

- Management Focus – Maintain the infrastructure that serves the intense public uses of this zone. Provide educational opportunities in the zone for the entire park, develop / maintain ADA access in the zone, and maintain public safety and good hospitality practices.
- Development – Provide ADA improvements as needed to attain ‘program’ accessibility. Improve facilities to compliment education. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.




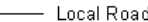


Scenic Zone

This zone is comprised of the shoreline frontage of the park on the St. Clair River where viewing of Great Lakes freighters and other watercraft is extremely popular.

Algonac State Park **SCENIC ZONE** (St. Clair River frontage)



LEGEND:

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Algonac_Property_Line |  M-29 |
|  Scenic Zone |  Local Road |
|  Marine City Drain |  St. Clair River |



0 0.1 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles

- Natural Resources –In general, the natural resources can be modified to support visitor activities, provided it still falls within the guidance of the Stewardship Plan, and it does not hinder the scenic opportunities provided.
- Historic/Cultural Resources – **If any activity in this zone requires earthwork, it must first be reviewed and approved by Stewardship.**
- Recreation Opportunities – Development of strategic view locations along the scenic corridor should be pursued in the interest of optimizing viewing opportunities and assuring public safety in the process.

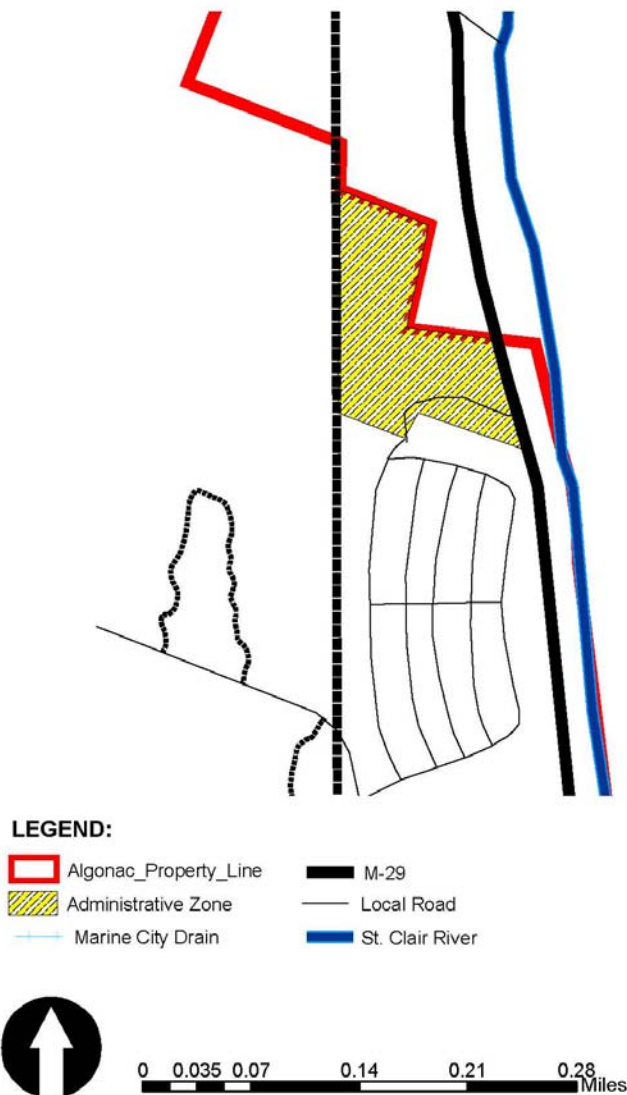
Improvements for visitor access to the river for shore fishing represent a potential for improved viewing in conjunction with expanded recreational opportunities in the park.

- Education Opportunities – There is a great opportunity for interpretive signage at key location(s) along the river frontage. Education today is focused on what happens inland. Education targeting Great Lakes shipping and boats is equally important and appropriate to both the Scenic Zone and the Developed Recreation Zone.
- Visitor Experience – Bounded by M-29, the visitor will experience the high summer traffic of the road while viewing the St. Clair River and boating activity. Boating activity, particularly that of Great Lakes shipping (freighters), is the primary focus of this zone.
- Management Focus – Particularly with the busy summer traffic of M-29 and the fast moving currents of the St. Clair River, public safety must be a high priority. Management must also focus on maintenance of the views.
- Development – Any development in this zone must compliment the viewing opportunities. Educational kiosks and improvements to augment educational opportunities are desirable actions. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

Visitor Services Zone

This zone is well defined, lying at the north end of the Riverfront Campground. There is a separate entrance to it from M-29.

Algonac State Park ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE



The zone encompasses the developed areas required for program administration and operations. Typically it will include offices, contact stations, maintenance facilities and all related land base required to conduct the business of running a state park or recreation area. At Algonac, a holding of undeveloped land immediately north of the current shop area has been included in this zone for purposes of future expansion.

- Natural Resources – In general, the natural resources can be modified to support the needs for administration of the park.
- Historic/Cultural Resources – **If any activity in this zone requires earthwork, it must first be reviewed and approved by Stewardship.** A known archaeological site exists next to the current manager's residence.
- Recreation Opportunities – None
- Education Opportunities – Educational materials can be made available in the office 'public space', and office staff can provide verbal information. There is a great opportunity to direct visitors to other informational locations in the park.
- Management Focus – Provide public access (ADA) to the office from the campground and office parking lot, and (ADA) access within the building. Assure security of offices, facilities and equipment. Provide a safe working environment for staff.
- Development – Development in this zone will be for purposes of complimenting the administrative needs of the park. All development will meet the approval requirements of the planning process.

FUTURE PLAN INSERTS

10-Year Action Plan (LONG-RANGE ACTION GOALS TO ATTAIN GMP) - Phase-2 of the Management Planning Process

5-Year Action Plan (SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT) - Phase-3 of the Management Planning Process

Annual Action Plan and Progress Report - Phase-4 of the Management Planning Process

Operational/Management Resources - The following categories are established as a guide for the park manager to use to supplement this working document. Other categories can be added as needed.

- Annual Work Plan (NOTE...this should reflect the values and emphasis of the Zones established for the park and tie-in with Phase 4 – Annual Report of Management Planning)
- Staffing
- Budget
- Equipment
- Training
- Public Relations / Marketing / Outreach
- Programming (ie. special events, MCCC, volunteers, etc.)
- Public Health, Safety, and Welfare
 - Water system
 - Wastewater system
 - Electrical system
 - Law enforcement
 - Emergency access plans
 - Wildfire plan
- CRS
- FOIA
- Infrastructure Inventory (when available)
- Raster Image Index
- Raster Images of historic park plans
- Other...